REMARKS

In the Amendment and Response presented herewith, Applicants have added new Claims 56-65. Support for the claim amendments presented herein can be found in the specification as originally filed, for example, on pages 18-23 and on pages 38-45. Applicants have canceled Claims 40-55 in this paper. Claims 56-65 are now pending in this application. As set forth below, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the claims are respectfully requested.

1. Prior Art Rejections

Claims 40, 48, 51 and 52 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) were rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,344,692 to Schmoock ("Schmoock"). Claims 51 and 55 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 2,237,152 to Larmour ("Larmour"). Claims 40, 48, 51, and 52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 2,033,066 to Frohlich ("Frohlich"). Claims 40, 43, 48, 50, 50-53 and 55 were rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,620,775 to LaPerre. ("LaPerre"). Claims 40-55 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Applicants' discussion of the prior art in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,338,591 to Poll ("Poll").

Applicants submit newly added Claims 56-65 are patentable over the cited references because none of the cited references, individually or collectively, teach or suggest at least the following italicized language of new independent Claims 56, 60, and 64:

56. A leather article, comprising:
a leather base and a waterproof layer which is coated on said leather base;
a solid state piece having a volume of 10 mm^3 or less fixed directly to said leather base with a hot-melt adhesive through said waterproof layer, wherein a fixed portion of said leather base directly underneath said solid state piece has a density higher than a portion not included in said fixed portion.

60. A leather article, comprising:

a leather base and a waterproof layer which is coated on said leather base, *wherein a solid state piece having a volume of 10 mm^3 or less is fixed directly to said leather base with a hot-melt adhesive through said waterproof layer by means for ultrasonic vibration,*

wherein a fixed portion of said leather base directly underneath said solid state piece has a density higher than a portion not included in said fixed portion by means for compressing said solid state piece.

64. A leather article comprising:

a leather base;

a waterproof layer coated along a surface of said leather base;

a solid state piece having a volume of 10 mm^3 or less adhered directly to said leather base with a hot-melt adhesive;

wherein said waterproof layer is at least partially transmuted or removed at the interface between the solid state piece and leather base;

and *wherein a portion of said leather base at the interface between the leather base and solid state piece is thinner in thickness than a portion of said leather base not contacting said solid state piece.*

Schmoock (U.S. Patent No. 5,344,692)

Schmoock teaches that a hot-melt 3 is applied on the rough surface 5 of the leather so as to smooth the rough surface of a flexible laminate. As shown Fig. 1 of Schmoock, the flexible laminate includes a substrate 2 consisting of leather and having uneven side 4, and a coating 1 which is composed of an inner layer 3 adjacent the uneven side 4 of the substrate 2 and an outer layer 6. The outer layer 6 is composed of two superimposed strata including an inner stratum 11 adjacent the layer 3 and an outer stratum 13 with an exposed surface 33.

Larmour (U.S. Patent No. 2,237,152)

Larmour teaches a method of inlaying articles made of synthetic resins. A pressing member 5 of Larmour is mounted directly above the inlay and has associated with heating means for heating the pressing member 5, and power means for forcing the pressing member 5 towards the anvil 1. The pressing member 5 is forced against the ornament 4 which is made of metal and quickly assumes the temperature of the pressing member 5. Since the heat of the pressing member 5 is communicated

through the metal ornament 4 to the article 2, there is localized softening of the surface of the article 2, the softened portions being confined substantially to the size and shape of the ornament to be inlaid. Since heat and pressure are applied to the ornament 4, the ornament 4 embeds itself into the surface of the article as shown in Fig. 2. The ornament 4 is not adhered directly to the surface by a hot-melt adhesive. In Larmour, in order to further secure the inlay in position and to minimize any irregularities occasioned by the embedding operation, the surface of the article 2 is preferably burnished by the roll mill 6 as shown in Fig. 3. The roll mill 6 polishes the article 2 and removes any irregularities and is preferably operated so that the material of the article 2 to be inlaid is forced toward the inlaid ornament 4. Larmour, however, does not teach or suggest, for example, a solid state piece having a volume of 10 mm^3 or less adhered directly to said leather base with a hot-melt adhesive nor a waterproof layer that is at least partially transmuted or removed at the interface between the solid state piece and leather base.

Frohlich (U.S. Patent No. 2,033,066)

Frohlich teaches a method of forming ornamented surfaces to articles faced with leather and to the lace-faced leather product resulting from the articles. Frohlich particularly features the use of delicate fine laces having threads that are extremely fine that the resulting effect of these fine gauge fibrous threads is the formation of a delicate tracery and sometimes almost invisibly fine lines. The fine threads provide a cobweb-like effect to the surface of the leather.

LaPerre (U.S. Patent No. 5,620,775)

LaPerre teaches a glass micro-sphere (bead) coated article having a smooth surface. As shown in Fig. 3 of LaPerre, the bead coated article 5 has an adhesive layer 3 for bonding the glass beads 1 of low refractive index and the adhesive layer 3 is disposed on a substrate 4. Also, the irregularly shaped glass particles 2 are embedded in the adhesive layer 3. In LaPerre, the glass beads are adhered to the substrate with the adhesive layer.

Poll (U.S. Patent No. 5,338,591)

Poll teaches that gems 5 are embedded in a three-layer carrier 1 which is formed of a lower layer 3, an intermediate layer 4 and an upper layer 2. The lower layer 3 and the upper layer 2 of the carrier 1 are made of an impressible material, i.e. foamed materials and non-woven fabrics. An irreversibly deformable layer is disposed between the upper and lower layers. The upper layer 2 is not penetrated by the gem tip so that gem 5 is connected only with upper layer 2 and not with one of layers 3 and 4 located therebelow. *See* Fig. 1 and col. 1, lines 55-64.

Based upon the foregoing, Applicants believe that the new claims presented herein are in condition for allowance and such disposition is respectfully requested. In the event that a telephone conversation would further prosecution and/or expedite allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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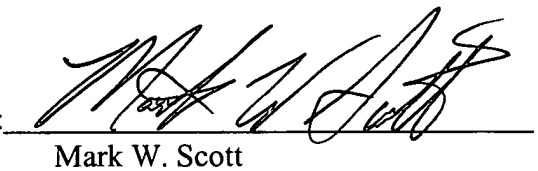
By: 

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